GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:783
ANSWERED ON:26.02.2001
IMPORT OF TOXIC MERCURY
DINESH CHANDRA YADAV;RAM JEEVAN SINGH;VILAS BABURAO MUTTEMWAR

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large quantity of used mercury is being exported to some of the private parties in India by United States of America;

(b) if so, the reasons for importing this deadly toxic;

(c) whether the Government have examined the ill-effect of this toxic on the human body and if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the private parties have the prior permission from the Government in this regard; and

(e) if not, the action taken against the parties importing the used mercury?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS(SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) to (e) On 1st January, 2001 the `Times of India` carried an article entitled `America`s Unwanted Heading for India` regarding possible shipment of 118 MT of toxic mercury from the United States of America to India. As import of mercury bearing wastes has been banned vide notification No. SO 897 dated 26th December, 1996 by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Member (Customs), Ministry of Surface Transport and Chief Secretaries of all the coastal states were asked to take immediate action to ensure that Customs authorities in all the ports are informed of the possible landing of the above consignment, to confiscate the consignment on arrival, keep it in safe custody and inform the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

As import of waste containing mercury is banned, no permission has been granted to any private party by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. No information has been received from the Customs department on arrival or otherwise of the said consignment.